

# Check the Weather-Know the Heat Index



- Children take longer to adjust to hot environments than adults do!
- Their bodies reach core temperature much faster.
- Develop a habit of checking the heat index.

## HEAT ILLNESS TYPES AND SYMPTOMS

The term “heat illness” means a serious medical condition resulting from the body’s inability to cope with a particular heat load and includes heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, and heat stroke.

**HEAT STROKE:** the most serious health problem for coaches, athletes and those that work in hot environments. It is caused by the failure of the body’s internal mechanism to regulate its core temperature. Sweating stops and the body can no longer rid itself of excess heat.

## VICTIMS OF HEAT STROKE WILL DIE UNLESS TREATED PROMPTLY

Signs include:

- Mental confusion, delirium, loss of consciousness, convulsions or coma.
- A body temperature of 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Hot, dry skin, which may be red, mottled, or bluish.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION:** results from loss of fluid through sweating when a person has failed to drink enough fluids or take in enough salt, or both. The person with heat exhaustion still sweats, but experiences extreme weakness or fatigue, giddiness, nausea, or headache. The skin is clammy and moist, the complexion pale or flushed, and the body temperature normal or slightly higher.

- **What to do:**
- **Bring the child indoors or into the shade.**
- **Loosen or remove clothing.**
- **Encourage food and drink.**
- **Give child a bath in cool (not cold) water.**
- **Call the parent and School Nurse.**
- **If the child is too exhausted or ill to eat or drink, intravenous fluids may be necessary.**
- **If left untreated, heat exhaustion may escalate into heat stroke, which can be fatal.**
- **Call for emergency medical help.**

**HEAT CRAMPS:** are painful spasms of the muscles caused when a person drinks large quantities of water but fails to replace their bodies’ salt loss. Tired muscles used for performing the work are usually the ones most susceptible to cramps. Fainting (*heat syncope*) may be a problem when a person who is not acclimated to a hot environment simply stands still in the heat.

**HEAT RASH:** also known as *prickly heat* may occur in hot, humid environments where sweat is not easily removed from the surface of the skin by evaporation. Heat rash that is extensive or infected can be so uncomfortable that it inhibits sleep and impedes a person’s performance, or even results in temporary or permanent disability.

# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Limit outside activities to 10-15 minutes for recess!

The two best defenses against the heat are:

- Getting out of the sun or finding a cool resting place when one is *starting* to overheat and needs to cool down. Limit excessive exercise /activities which would increase body heat and sweating.
- Keep Hydrated!!! Drink cool, fresh water throughout the day (four 8-oz cups per hour) during hot weather. That is how much water the human body can lose just by sweating.

## 5 Must Know Heat Injury Preventive Steps:

1. Frequent drinking of water
2. Rest in cooler area
3. Give time to acclimatize
4. Know signs and symptoms
5. Know emergency steps

Personal risk factors for heat illness mean factors such as:

- ✓ an individual's age,
- ✓ degree of acclimatization
- ✓ overall general health
- ✓ water consumption
- ✓ alcohol and/or caffeine consumption
- ✓ use of prescription medications that affect the body's water retention
- ✓ other physiological responses to heat

The term "shade" means blockage of direct sunlight. Canopies, umbrellas, and other temporary structures or devices may be used to provide shade. One indicator that blockage is sufficient is when objects do not cast a shadow in the area of blocked sunlight. Shade is not adequate when heat in the area of shade defeats the purpose of shade, which is to allow the body to cool.

